News release

1 November 2007

Sting in the tail from Tropical Storm Noel

After a relatively quiet tropical-storm season in the Caribbean, Tropical Storm Noel has been a harsh reminder of the power of the weather.

Heavy rain and strong winds have caused widespread destruction across the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Over 20 to 30 inches of rain has fallen in parts, triggering mud slides and flash floods resulting in the deaths of over 80 people.

Noel is now expected to track north-east over the next 24 hours, with winds increasing close to hurricane strength as it heads toward the Bahamas.

The latest storm advisory from the National Hurricane Center (NHC) in Miami is forecasting maximum sustained winds of 70 m.p.h., with stronger gusts, and up to 15 inches of rain as the storm crosses the Bahamas. There are currently tropical storm warnings in place for the central and north-western Bahamas.

Official bulletins are issued by the NHC, but the Met Office freely exchanges data with its colleagues in Miami to provide the fullest possible information.

The Met Office has a responsibility to protect the lives of British citizens abroad and has been issuing regular briefings to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) throughout the North Atlantic tropical-storm season.

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